Ministry of Social Services

Plan for 2015-16

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Government of Saskatchewan

Statement from the Minister

The Honourable
Donna Harpauer

Minister of Social Services

I am pleased to present the Ministry of Social Services' Plan for 2015-16. The plan identifies the key actions we will undertake to support our *Saskatchewan Plan for Growth* and vision for the future of our province. Government's Direction and Budget for 2015-16 is focused on *Keeping Saskatchewan Strong*, balancing building for the future with fiscal responsibility.

The Ministry of Social Services works with a diverse range of partners to build safe, dynamic community resources in order to promote inclusion and enhance the quality of life for our province's most vulnerable residents.

In the coming year, we will continue to work closely with our partners in the housing sector to implement the Housing Strategy for Saskatchewan and increase the supply and affordability of homes in the province.

We will continue our commitment to the renewal of the child welfare system with our First Nations and Métis partners, including a focus on enhancing our prevention supports so more children can remain with their families.

With the support of our partner ministries and the valued advice from our Citizen Consultation Team, we will continue our work on the province's Disability Strategy and our commitment to make Saskatchewan the best place in Canada for people with disabilities.

With the support of the recently appointed 11 member Advisory Group on Poverty Reduction, we will further our commitment to the reduction of poverty in Saskatchewan. The Ministry of Social Services will lead the work of the province's Poverty Reduction Strategy in 2015-16 with this valued group which includes community organizations and five partner ministries.

The plan includes many more initiatives which will contribute to improving the quality of life for Saskatchewan's most vulnerable citizens.

The Ministry will report on progress made toward this plan, within the financial parameters provided, in the 2015-16 Annual Report.

Government of Saskatchewan

Response to Government Direction

The Government of Saskatchewan is committed to *Keeping Saskatchewan Strong*. The province faces challenges due to volatile resource revenue; however, Saskatchewan's economy is diverse and resilient. There are strengths in many sectors from agriculture and manufacturing to resources such as potash and uranium.

With controlled spending and continued support for the conditions necessary for economic growth, the Government will meet the needs of our growing province. Investments in people and infrastructure continue to support Government's commitment to establishing Saskatchewan as the best place to live, to work, to start a business, to get an education, to raise a family and to build a life.

Saskatchewan's Vision

"... to be the best place in Canada – to live, to work, to start a business, to get an education, to raise a family and to build a life."

Sustaining growth and opportunities for Saskatchewan people	Meeting the challenges of growth	Securing a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan people	Delivering responsive and responsible government

Government's vision and four goals provide the framework for ministries, agencies and third parties to align their programs and services and meet the needs of Saskatchewan's citizens.

All ministries and agencies will report on progress in their 2015-16 annual reports.

Operational Plan

Mandate Statement

The Ministry helps children be safe from abuse and neglect, and individuals to meet their basic needs and participate in their community.

Mission Statement

We deliver programs and services that help people in need achieve a better quality of life.

Government Goals

Sustaining growth and opportunities for Saskatchewan people	Meeting the challenges of growth	Securing a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan people	Delivering responsive and responsible government

Ministry Goal

Programs and services set the foundation to meet our clients' basic needs

Strategy

Ensure children in out-of-home care are safe, have stability, and make successful life transitions

Key Actions

- Continue the review of child welfare legislation to ensure regulations support contemporary social values and enable best practices in services and supports for children, caregivers and families
- Support First Nations to use the Ministry's evidence-based assessment tools to improve the delivery of child protection services
- Expand the provision of services delegated by the Ministry for delivery by First Nations agencies
- Review practice standards to ensure they support child safety, stability, and family reunification

Performance Measures

Proportion of children in out-of-home care placed with extended family members
By March 31, 2018, 45 per cent of children in out-of-home care are in these types of placements

Number of families where allegation of neglect is an identified concern
By March 31, 2018, there will be 10 per cent fewer families where allegation of neglect is an identified concern in the province

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Strategy

Increase the availability of housing for individuals and families in greatest need

Key Actions

- Focus new housing investment in communities with the greatest housing needs
- Work with Northern communities and stakeholders to respond to housing needs in the North and increase the capacity of northern communities to plan housing
- Improve and expand public housing options to meet the needs of those in greatest need

Performance Measures

Provincial housing vacancy rate
A three per cent vacancy rate is maintained through March 31, 2018

Vacancy rate in Saskatchewan's ten largest communities
One hundred per cent of Saskatchewan's ten largest communities have a three per cent vacancy rate by March 31, 2020

Annual housing starts
There are 8,000 or more new housing starts annually through March 31, 2018

Strategy

Improve quality of life and support community inclusion for people with disabilities

Key Actions

- Continue the transition of Valley View Centre residents to communities:
  - expand community-based residential services
  - expand respite services
  - expand the crisis prevention and outreach support
- Release and develop an approach to implementation for the provincial Disability Strategy
- Assess outcomes from the 2014-15 pilot of self-directed funding and evaluate its effectiveness in increasing client independence and community inclusion
- Implement a planned increase to the Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID) benefit, and advance work on earnings and asset exemptions based on recommendations of the Task Team on Income Support for People with Disabilities

Performance Measures

Enrolment in the Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disabilities (SAID) program
Enrolment is two per cent or less of the provincial population by March 31, 2018

Valley View Centre residents transitioned to the community
By March 31, 2018, there are no residents at Valley View Centre

Government Goals

Sustaining growth and opportunities for Saskatchewan people	Meeting the challenges of growth	Securing a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan people	Delivering responsive and responsible government

Ministry Goal

Citizens gain independence through self-reliance and prevention

Strategy

Improve services and programming to help people experiencing low income improve their quality of life

Key Action

- Support the development of a Poverty Reduction Strategy in collaboration with community partners

Strategy

Support families to safely care for their children

Key Actions

- Expand the types of interventions available to respond to reports of child neglect and abuse
- Continue to focus on providing supports to help keep families intact and children safely cared for in the family home

Performance Measure

Number of children entering out-of-home care due to neglect
By March 31, 2018, ten per cent fewer children enter out-of-home care due to neglect

Strategy

Increase the availability and quality of community-based prevention services for vulnerable individuals and families

Key Action

- Work with the Community-Based Organization (CBO) sector to implement findings of the CBO Sustainability project

Strategy

Increase sustainable transitions to employment for Income Assistance clients

Key Action

- Implement an income assistance strategy to:
  - simplify programs
  - enhance client-centred service
  - strengthen referral processes for employable clients to employment services

Performance Measures

Income assistance enrolment rate
Through March 31, 2018, the enrolment rate in the Saskatchewan Assistance Program and Transitional Employment Allowance does not exceed three per cent of the provincial population of 0 to 64 year-olds living off-reserve

Proportion of income assistance clients who use the program for six months or less
By March 31, 2018, 65 per cent of clients without barriers to employment leave income assistance within six months of enrolment

Strategy

Ensure housing is available, accessible, and affordable for Saskatchewan citizens

Key Actions

- Increase the efficiency and sustainability of public housing:
  - implement approved changes to the Affordable Rental Housing program
  - assess the impact of expiring subsidy agreements on the province's supply of affordable rental housing
  - increase the cost-effectiveness of the housing system and ensure consistent, high-quality client service
- Support the provincial Disability Strategy with respect to accessible, affordable housing for people with disabilities

Government Goals

Sustaining growth and opportunities for Saskatchewan people	Meeting the challenges of growth	Securing a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan people	Delivering responsive and responsible government

Ministry Goal

Our people and our organization are effective and efficient

Strategy

Build and maintain a culture that demonstrates our commitment to excellence

Key Actions

- Develop an employee recognition program
- Develop a code of conduct
- Implement the Ministry's Learning Strategy

Strategy

Ensure innovation and accountability in the delivery of Ministry programs and services

Key Actions

- Strengthen information management and privacy policies to support citizen-centred service
- Assess the 2014-15 pilot of social impact bond funding to identify how and where it can be of value in the future

Strategy

Create a safe, healthy, productive, and inclusive workplace

Key Actions

- Increase employee retention
- Continue to implement the Ministry's Safety Action Plan
- Explore the development of a diversity initiative

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Performance Measures

Workforce diversity
By March 31, 2018, the workforce representation of employee groups meets or exceeds Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission targets

Workplace safety
By March 31, 2018, the workplace injury rate will be 5.5 per cent or less

Strategy

Modernize Ministry physical infrastructure and information technology supports

Key Actions

- Implement information technology disaster recovery plans to support business continuity
- Enhance reporting through the Ministry's case management system

Highlights

The Government of Saskatchewan continues to deliver on its commitment in the *Saskatchewan Plan for Growth* to invest in a higher quality of life for all Saskatchewan citizens. The Ministry of Social Services' 2015-16 budget meets ongoing commitments to programs and services for our province's most vulnerable residents. Highlights of these funding commitments include:

Income Assistance and Disability Supports

Honouring our commitment to work towards making Saskatchewan the best place in Canada for people living with disabilities, our 2015-16 budget provides for fourth year increases in a four-year commitment to make enhancements to the Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID) program and recognizes the growth in caseload for this program. In June 2015, the following increases will be implemented for SAID:

- Couples living independently will receive a $55 increase
- Single individuals living independently will receive an increase of $50
- People in residential care will receive an additional $20 per month

Additional increases in this area include:

- An increase of $6.1 million for disability Community-Based Organizations that provide spaces and programming for people with intellectual disabilities. Included in this increase is funding to ensure a seamless transition of people living at Valley View Centre to the community.
- A net increase of $471,000 for the Seniors Income Plan for the implementation of year four of Government's commitment to increase benefits by $10 per month each year for four years.

The Ministry of Social Services, with support from the ministries of Health, Education, Advanced Education, Economy, Finance, Justice, and Government Relations remains committed to the development of the Province's Disability Strategy in 2015-16. The Ministry of Social Services' 2015-16 budget includes a funding commitment of $275,000 toward the Strategy.

Housing

The 2015-16 Ministry budget continues the province's commitment to the Saskatchewan Advantage Housing Plan and to the Housing Strategy for Saskatchewan to provide better access to safe, quality, and affordable housing for Saskatchewan people. Through the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, programs such as Habitat for Humanity and the federal/provincial bilateral Affordable Housing Agreement will continue. The Agreement has been extended to 2019 and is to be used for new affordable housing supply, home renovations, home adaptations, and rent/housing supplements.

The 2015-16 budget for Housing includes:

- $800,000 towards the Rental Construction Incentive and the Affordable Home Ownership Program
- $755,000 for program costs

Child and Family Services

In 2015-16, the Ministry will continue working with First Nations and Métis partner organizations to renew the child welfare system and enhance prevention supports to enable children to safely remain in the family home.

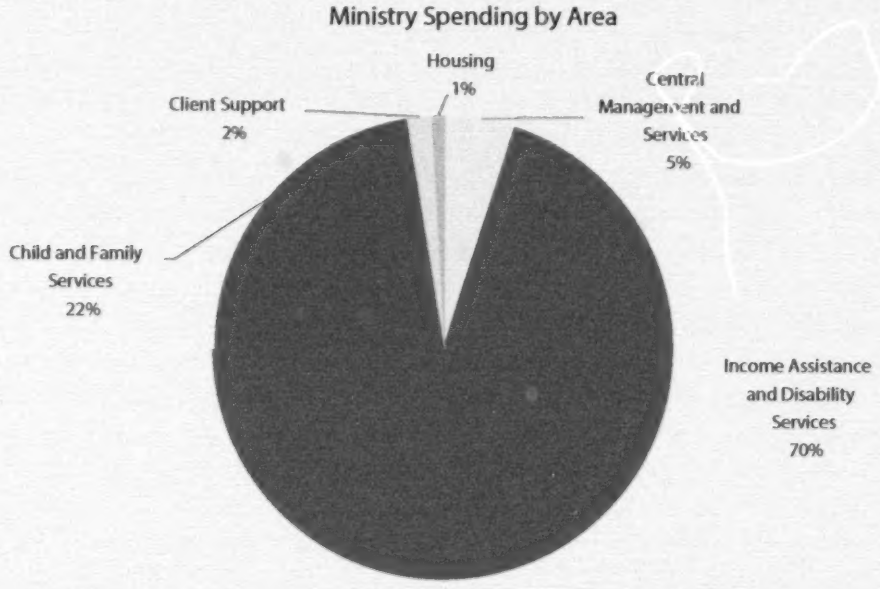
Our support in the coming year includes a $7.7 million increase for Child Welfare Transformation, part of the Saskatchewan Child and Family Agenda, including:

- $3 million increase for foster care and extended family care
- $1 million in individualized preventative services to keep children from coming into the care of the Ministry
- $1.3 million for Assisted Adoption to provide maintenance payments and special needs benefits for children who would otherwise be wards of the Province
- $2 million in funding for medically fragile children in response to calls from the Provincial Auditor and Advocate for Children and Youth for better identification of needs and provision of services to children with complex needs
- $400,000 for youth transitions from private treatment

Financial Summary

2015-16 Estimates	(in thousands of dollars)
Central Management and Services	50,552
Income Assistance and Disability Services	701,041
Child and Family Services	226,143
Client Support	17,214
Housing	9,235
Ministry Appropriation	**1,004,185**
Capital Asset Acquisitions	(9,695)
Non-Appropriated Expense Adjustment	6,610
Ministry Expense	**1,001,100**
FTE Staff Complement	1,731.0

For more information, see the Budget Estimates at: http://www.saskatchewan.ca/budget



For More Information

Please visit www.saskatchewan.ca/government/government-structure/ministries/social-services or call the Ministry's Communications Branch at 306-787-3686.

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